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ABSTRACT

Results of a survey of 23 community colleges in Washington State in regard to the use of potential use of paraprofessionals in the area of guidance and counseling are provided. Of these colleges, 6 were using paraprofessionals, 1 was planning to add two, 11 planned to add paraprofessionals "when their budget allowed," and 5 reported no plans for including paraprofessionals. The functions assigned to paraprofessionals currently on staff were varied; these included information giving, scheduling/advising, receptionist, data-control test coordination, administration and scoring, admissions, distribution of occupational-educational information, and a number of other duties. Contractual arrangements for the six institutions that had paraprofessionals varied. The educational preparation of the paraprofessionals ranged from a currently enrolled student to one who had completed a Master's Degree in higher education and counseling. In a similar survey of 23 Deans of Instruction of community colleges, there were significantly more paraprofessionals reported to be performing functions in the instructional programs, ranging from a high of 23 in the system to 1. It appeared that a majority of the paraprofessional positions were held by work-study students or students hired through some type of institutional fund. Common definitions for paraprofessionals presently exist that may be used as guidelines for community colleges. Four models for identifying the role of the paraprofessional, as advanced by Dr. Jane Matson, are provided. (DB)

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PARAPROFESSIONALS IN WASHINGTON COMMUNITY COLLEGES

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JC 730 205

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PARAPROFESSIONALS IN WASHINGTON COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Of 26 community college campuses in the state of Washington, 23 were represented by their guidance directors who participated in a survey conducted in February, 1972, that included information regarding the use or potential use of paraprofessionals in the area of guidance and counseling.

Six of the guidance directors reported paraprofessionals currently on their staffs, one was planning to add two paraprofessionals for 1972-73, 11 planned to add paraprofessionals "when their budget allowed," and five reported no plans for including paraprofessionals on their staff.

The functions assigned to the paraprofessionals currently on staff included information-giving, scheduling/advising, receptionist, data-control test coordination, administration and scoring, admissions, distribution of occupational-educational information, intake interviews, financial aid, placement, internal office administration, student-institution relationship functions in SPS, veterans information, federal program liaison, counselor aid for disadvantaged and minorities, coordinator of volunteer information-referral service, intramural advisor, tutor, and student health information.

Contractual arrangements reported for the six institutions which had paraprofessionals varied: (1) two paraprofessionals on 12 month contracts --- one at $600 per month ($3.75 per hour) and one at $800 per month ($5.00 per hour); (2) one person hired for 10 months but no salary figure reported; (3) one paraprofessional at a rate of $3.50 per hour but the position existed on a quarter-by-quarter basis; (4) one individual at $600 per month ($3.75 per hour) for 11 months; (5) one work-study student at $1.65 per hour but no time period indicated; and (6) one paraprofessional on a half-time basis (20 hours per week) at a rate of $3.00 per hour for nine months. Three paraprofessionals were placed on a classified employee schedule, three on a classified exempt status, one on a work-study rate, and none were placed on the faculty salary schedule.

The educational preparation of the paraprofessionals ranged from a currently enrolled student to one individual having completed a master's degree in higher education and counseling.

The respondents were asked to develop definitive statements applying to the qualifications and responsibilities of the paraprofessional. A summary of the statements elicited formulated the following:

> "A paraprofessional is an individual who has had limited but rather specific training. The training may range from a few hours to a bachelor's degree. The paraprofessional works under the supervision of a qualified professional and assumes some of the "lower level" professional functions such as information-referral, scheduling-advising, maintaining records, and administering (but not interpreting) tests."

it was concluded that careful consideration should be given to provision of adequate screening for the paraprofessional's initial placement and an on-going in-service training program. The paraprofessional should have the ability and interests to communicate effectively with students and staff. Due to the assuming of some of the professionals former functions by the paraprofessional, the professional should be able to expand on his own contribution to the academic community.

During February of 1972, a similar survey was conducted by the Instructional Commission of the Washington Association of Community Colleges and included Deans of Instruction as the respondents.

In listing paraprofessionals currently on staff, there were significantly more reported to be performing functions in the instructional programs than in the guidance and counseling programs:

Function	No. in the System
Laboratory Assistants	23
Readers	11
Shop Assistants	8
Testing Assistants	8
Learning Resource Center Assistants	22
Minority Student Coordinator	2
Veteran Affairs Coordinator	2
Student Center Facilitator	1
Developmental Instructional Assistants	17
Teaching Assistants	4
Information Specialist	2
Theatre Technician	1
Research Analyst	1
PE Equipment Assistants	2
Home and Family Life Aides	10
Interpreters for the Deaf	11
Community Liaison Coordinators	3
Federal Project Special Counselors	8
Federal Project Day Care Coordinator	1
Program Developer in Cont. Ed.	1
Coordinator	1
A-T Technician	2
Inventory Clerks	2

It appeared that a majority of the paraprofessional positions were held by work-study students or students hired through some type of institutional fund.

Fourteen of the 23 deans of instruction that participated in the survey indicated that there was a salary schedule in existence for paraprofessionals. Eleven of the 14 further clarified that the paraprofessional schedule was part of the classified salary schedule. Two indicated that it was part of the professional schedule. No salary ranges were summarized because the information provided was too spotty to be of value.

Twenty-one of the instructional deans cited definitions of paraprofessionals. Three were derived from institutional policy statements, 16 of the statements reflected actual practice on their campus, 16 were a definition of the respondent's own ideas, and seven were collective statements of several administrators on campus.

The definitions were similar to those presented by the guidance directors: "one who is competent to conduct defined professional tasks in a given field by virtue of past work experience and/or education and under the direct guidance and supervision of a professional." "The technician level position is paraprofessional. It carries certain instructional responsibilities associated with evaluating student performance and with assisting students in interpreting instructions and finds related to their lessons. As a supervisor, a person in such a position is charged with the responsibility for a facility. He is responsible for maintaining an atmosphere conductive to learning and one in which safety rules are maintained. A person in this position is not charged with primary responsibility for learning in any specific course offering---instructors have this responsibility---yet his background in related subject matter must be adequate to his specific responsibilities. "

SUMMARY

In attempting to describe who the paraprofessional is or should be, the relationship of the position to others which have traditionally existed (both professional and clerical), appropriate selection and training procedures, and contractual arrangements for the paraprofessional, both of the groups that responded emphasized the need for clear institutional statements to be formulated with accompanying justification and financial support.

Common definitions for paraprofessionals presently exist which may be used as guidelines for community colleges. However, it is encumbant upon the individual institution to determine how such guidelines apply both philosophically and realistically to its uniqueness. There are four models for identifying the role of the paraprofessional as advanced by Dr. Jane Matson during the EPDA Short-term Training Program held at North Seattle Community College in April of 1972, entitled "The Selection and Training of Para-Professionals in Student Personnel." Although these models are not all-inclusive, they may be quite useful for the instituion that wants to establish paraprofessional positions:

1. Presently enrolled students who are asked to do a number of tasks such as peer counseling, tutoring, recruiting, and certain work-study jobs. These students would usually work on a part-time basis. They may be paid for their services, volunteer, or they may receive credit as remuneration.

2. People who are specifically prepared through an extensive program such as human services aid or student personnel services aid and who are usually two-year graduates. During their training they may have emphasized areas within student personnel such as the Financial Aid Office, Placement Office, Student Activities, etc. Typically they are paid on a full-time basis for the job functions they perform.

3. Those people who are hired because of unique characteristics: (usually indigenous to the community) and who may or may not hold a degree. For example, a minority individual who would assist in the recruitment of students, a senior citizen who has special skills which can be used within an educational program already in existence, others who occupy special positions within the community setting such as ex-convicts, single parents, veterans, etc. Depending upon the needs of the institution these people may be hired on a full-time basis or they may be part of a resource bank of people to be used at various strategic times during the course of an academic year. They would receive training in a core program to acquaint them with aspects of the institution as well as developing desirable qualities for interacting with other people.

4. Individuals who have no specific training directly applicable to those institutional functions which have been identified as being that which a paraprofessional could perform, but have qualities which indicate that they could be trained with relative ease to perform such functions. These people may already hold a position in the institutional setting such as a secretary or clerk or they might be someone who is not affiliated with the college at all. Examples of the type of functions which they might perform would be the evaluating of transcripts, test proctors, advisors during peak registration periods, etc. Again, depending on the institution, they may be hired on a full-time basis or accessed from a bank of people during specific times when they are needed.

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